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She-Ra and the Princesses of Power: An Intersectional Analysis of a Modern Reboot

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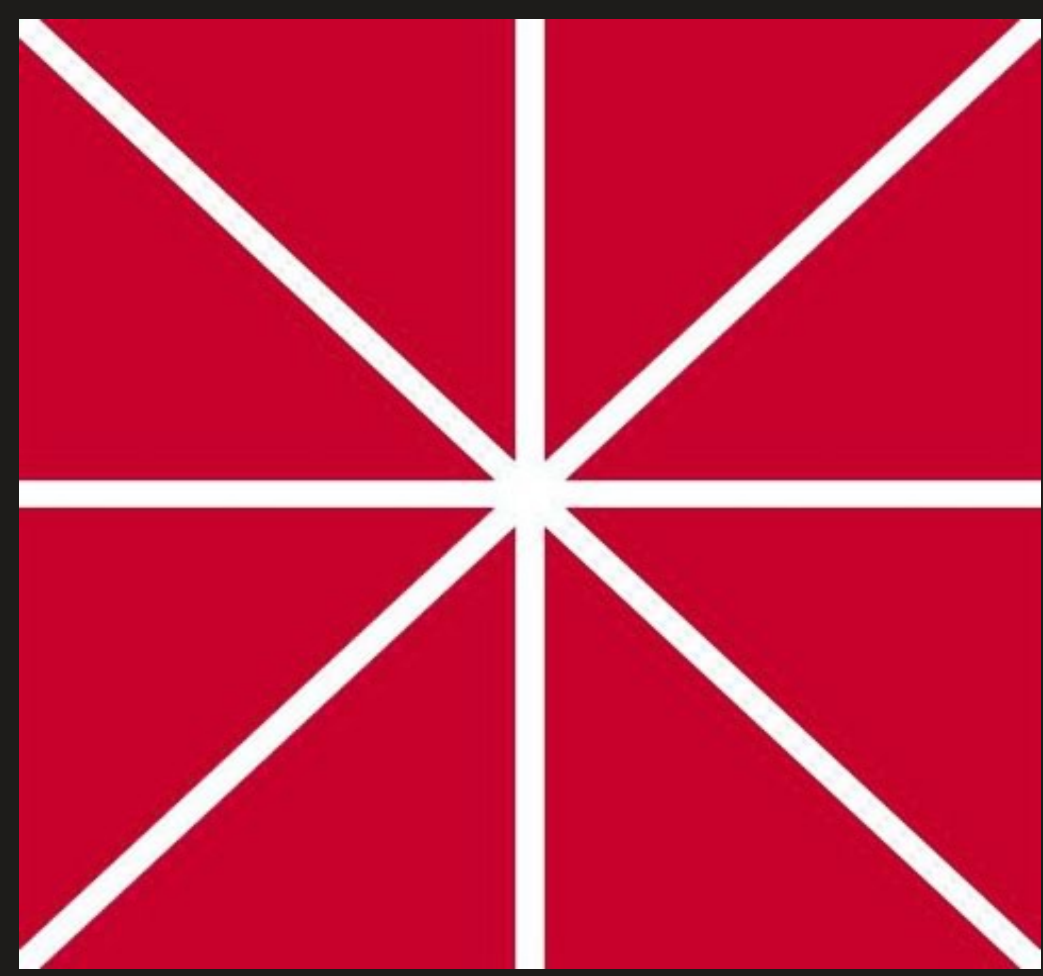


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Recommended Citation

Marshall, Laine, "She-Ra and the Princesses of Power: An Intersectional Analysis of a Modern Reboot" (2021). *Student Scholar Symposium Abstracts and Posters*. 480.
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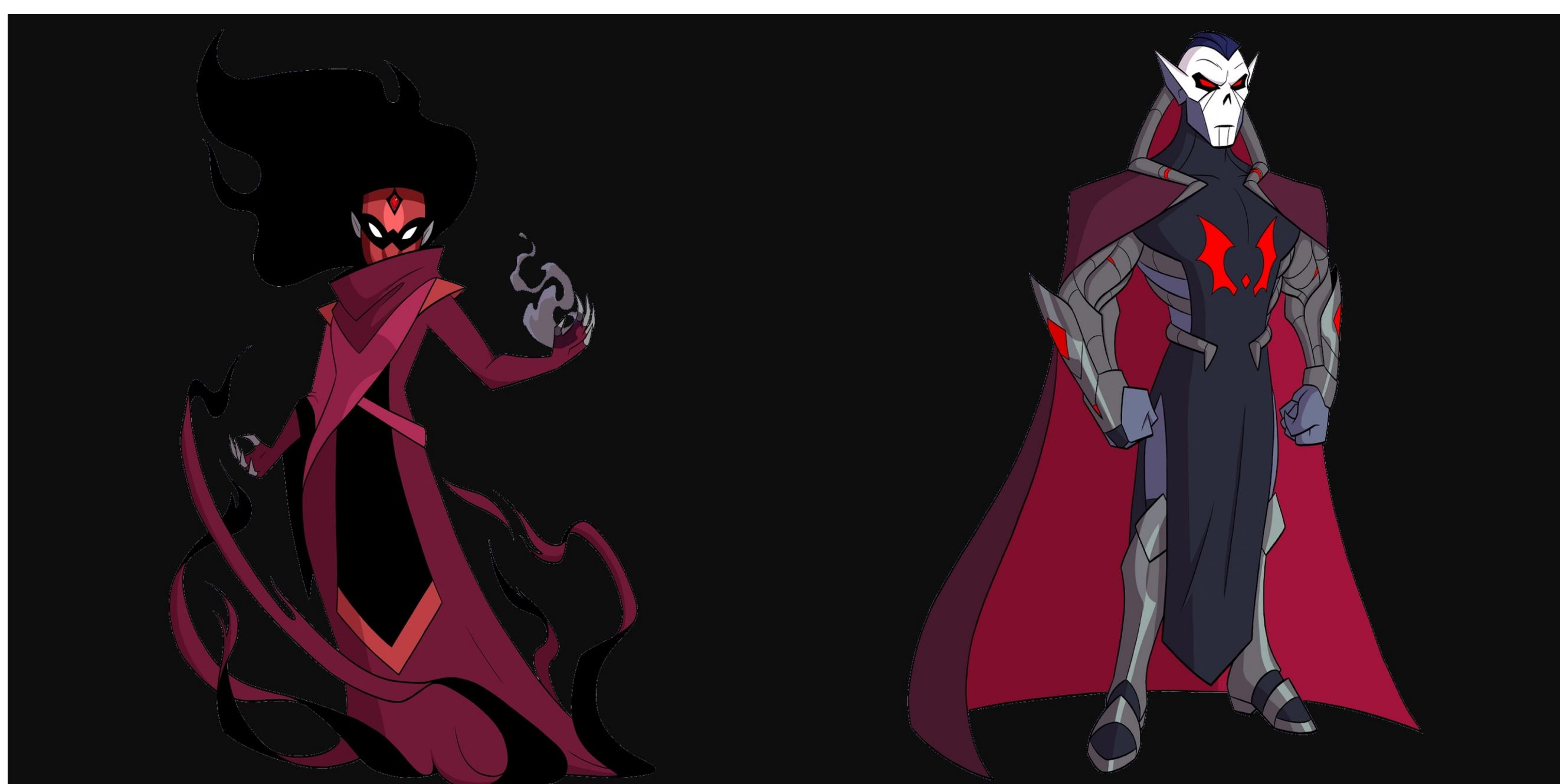
An Intersectional Analysis of a Modern Reboot

Children’s Animation

The social implications that arise from the pitfalls and successes of children’s animated media are demonstrative of the Hollywood Studio system’s inclination to use outdated constructs in order to secure profits while their employees are simultaneously taking increasingly larger risks in regards to representation. Studios, like Dreamworks, that rely on the viewership of children are bound to rely on the opinions of their parents. Parents control what their children watch, which gives them control over viewership numbers. Therefore, the ethics of the studio’s creative decisions and the success of any one show are representative of what modern audiences believe are beneficial, educational, and moral for their children.

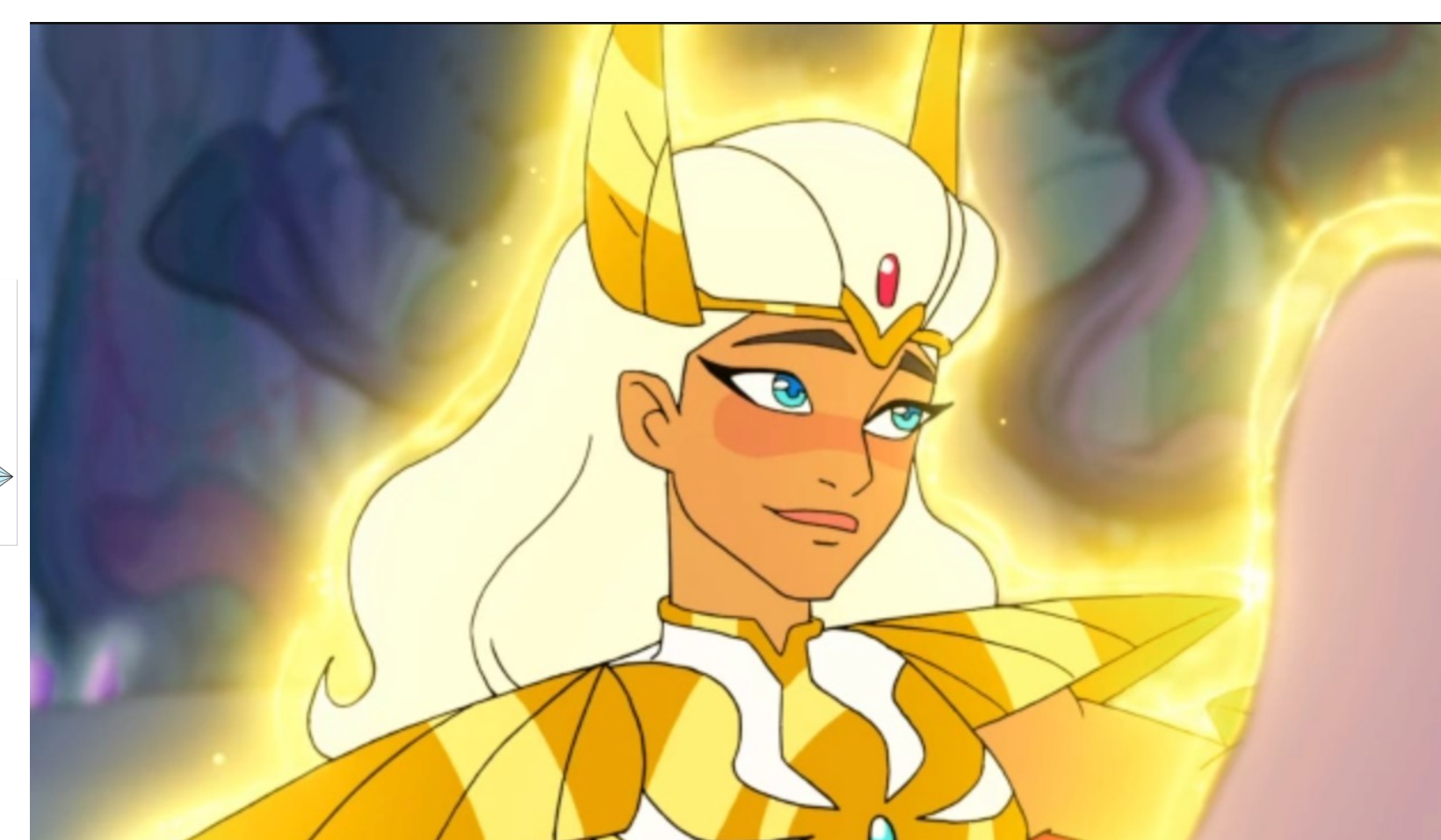
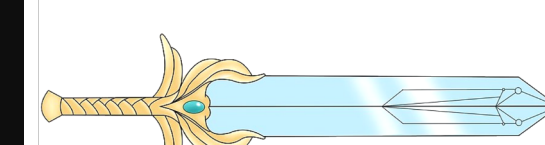
Disability Studies

- Autism: Entrapta
- Writer Sam Syzmanski became the leading force on Entrapta’s story
- Doesn’t understand social cues and is still valued by the group
 - The rest of the princesses learn to better interpret her actions
 - “I’m not good at people, but I am good at tech. I thought maybe if I could use tech to help you, you’d like me”
- Breaks harmful stereotypes regarding autistic people and empathy
- She is the only character who sees the humanity in the show’s early villain Hordak
- She is a tech super genius and unfortunately perpetuates the autistic savant stereotype
- Physical Disabilities: Hordak and Shadow Weaver
 - Character designs are the externalization of the internal
 - Hordak and Shadow Weaver are physically and visibly disabled
 - It is explained that they were disabled as punishment for their cruelty, and their symptoms are worsened by their evil deeds
 - This places the blame on disabled people for the disabilities, despite this being furthest from the truth



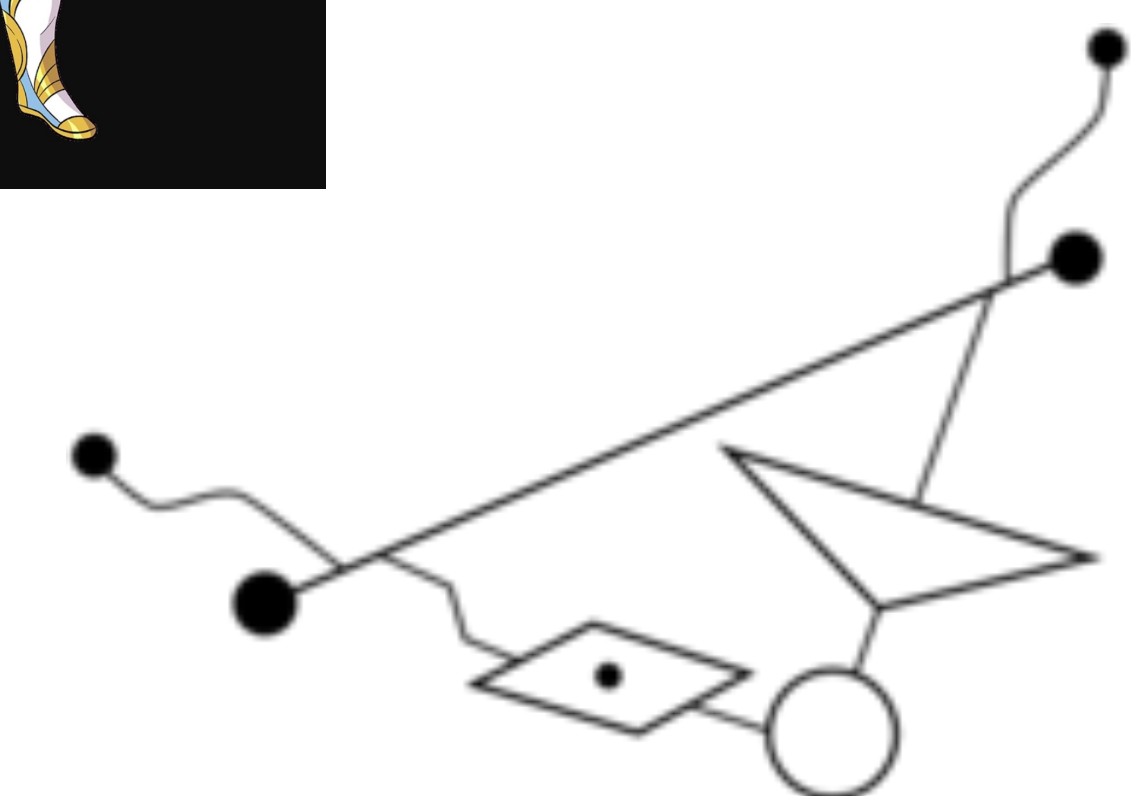
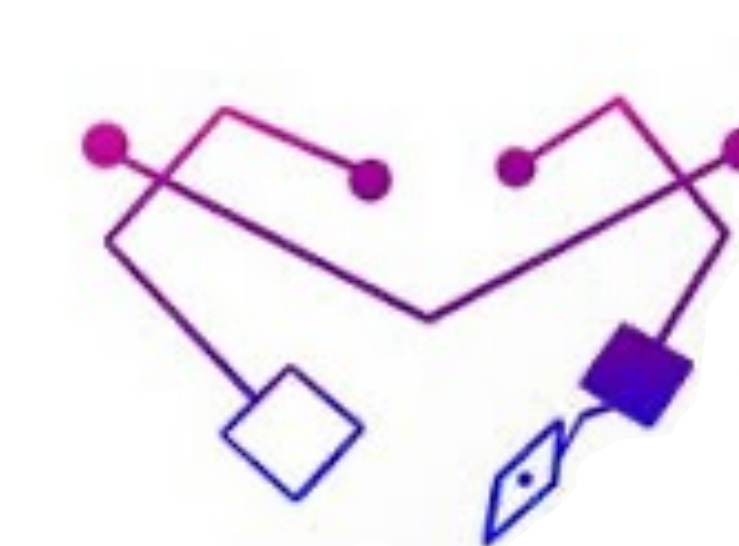
Characters and their Designs from a Feminist Perspective

- *She-Ra: The Princess of Power*
- Identical design: exposed legs, small waists, high heels, long hair; fair skin, and the same thin-hourglass body shape
 - outfits speak to their powers, not personalities
- Designed for easy toy production
- Problematic in the eyes of third wave feminism for lack of diversity
- New She-Ra and the Princesses of Power
 - Wide variety of heights, skin types, outfits, body shapes, levels of femininity/masculinity, and personalities
 - Outfits more representative of the narrative focus on self-identification and love
 - Adora is allowed an end-of-series redesign for She-Ra and the Sword of Protection
 - Aligns well with third wave feminism’s focus on diversity



Post-Colonial Theory

- Although the cast of characters is racially diverse, Adora is still a white, blond, blue-eyed woman; She-Ra even more so
- Especially concerning in an intensely anti-colonialist story
- Adora is certainly not able to succeed alone, but she remains the face of the Rebellion as She-Ra
- “White Savior” optics
- Mara
 - Mara is a woman of color and held the She-Ra mantle before Adora
 - She is controlled by the colonists and effectively becomes their pawn when they gain control of She-Ra
 - When she transforms into She-Ra, her dark eyes and hair are replaced with lighter features
 - This implies that lighter features are more “magical” and therefore desirable



Queer Theory

- Coming out arc without presence of homophobia
- Bow “comes out” to his two dads as a fighter for the Rebellion, and not a librarian
- Mirrors breakage of parental expectations after years of silence
- His parents are worried for him, but choose to love and accept him
- Queer Couples and Characters
 - Netossa and Spinnerella, Seahawk, Bow’s Parents, Rogelio and Kyle
 - Star Siblings
 - Used to be Star Sisters, now one of the siblings is a trans brother
 - Double-Trouble (they/them)
 - Non-binary shapeshifter played by non-binary actor Jacob Tobias
 - Creator Noelle Stevenson and Tobias both relate shapeshifting as a fictional representative of the queer desire to experiment with your body as a form of gender expression and as a safety mechanism
- Adora and Catra
 - Their love literally saves the galaxy from the enemy, placing their relationship front and center
 - They are only a couple for five minutes and twenty seconds
 - Following shows like *Legend of Korra* in holding a large queer reveal to end
 - Shows have to “prove” to studios that queer representation should/need to be in show
 - Important precedents: *Adventure Time*, *Steven Universe*, *Legend of Korra*, etc.